Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07511 01 OF 02 021422Z

46
ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0723
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 7511

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR
SUBJECT: KAPITSA ON CHINA, SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS, SOUTHEAST ASIA, SOUTH ASIA

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1. SUMMARY. MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S FIRST FAR EASTERN DIVISION, DISCUSSED PEKING'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES IN A MANNER WHICH SUGGETS THAT SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS MAY HAVE RECENTLY SUNK EVEN LOWER. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH ITALIAN DIPLOMATS, KAPITSA SAW THE SO-CALLED "SHANGHAI" REDICALS ON THE RISE AND CONSIDERED THEM HOSTILE TO BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON. HE CONFIRMED THE
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 07511 01 OF 02 021422Z

LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE LATEST ROUND OF BORDER TALKS AND--WITH TYPICAL KAPITSA FLOURISH--PULLED OUT AND READ

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

THE PREAMBLE, PURPORTEDLY AGREED TO BY BOTH SIDES IN 1971, OF A PROPOSED SINO-SOVIET BORDER TREATY. HE THREATENED THAT MOSCOW MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO ACT TO GET THE HELICOPTER BACK. ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, HE CONTRASTED SHARPLY THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN VIETNAM AND LAOS WITH THE "SAVAGE" BEHAVIOR OF THE "PRO-CHINESE" CAMBODIAN RULERS. IN SOUTH ASIA, HE SAID THAT MOSCOW HAD "SAVED" PAKISTAN, PRESUMABLY FROM WIDER INDIAN ATTACK IN 1971. END SUMMARY.

2. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ITALIAN MFA DUCCI MET KAPITSA FOR ABOUT A HALF HOUR ON MAY 23. KAPITSA TOLD ITALIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROMANO, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THAT MEETING, THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTINUE THE DUALOGUE WITH HIM THE NEXT WEEK. ROMANO FOLLOWED UP ON MAY 27. WHAT FOLLOWS IS HIS ACCOUNT OF KAPITSA'S REMARKS AT BOTH MEETINGS--REMARKS WHICH KAPITSA NO DOUBT INTENDED TO MAKE THE ROUNDS IN THE WEST.

3. CHINESE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS. KAPITSA SAID THAT A VERY RAPID INTERNAL REVOLUTION WAS GOING ON IN CHINA AND THAT CHOU EN-LAI'S POSITION HAD BEEN WEAKENED BY THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. THERE IS A NEW CONTROL COMMISSION ATTACHED TO THE POLITBURO WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTROLLING GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS. ACCORDING TO KAPITSA, IT CONSISTS OF SIX PERSONS: FOUR MEMBERS OF THE SHANGHAI GROUP AND TWO MILITARY OFFICERS. KAPITSA ALSO SPOKE OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLITBURO'S STANDING COMMITEE. HE SAID THAT THERE ARE NOW FIVE "SHANGHAI" PEOPLE ON THE COMMITTEE, COMPARED WITH ONLY THREE SUPPORTERS OF CHOU EN-LAI. HE LISTED THE FORMER AS MAO, WANG HUNG-WEN, CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, CHIANG CHING, AND YAO WEN-YUAN. THE LATTER TWO ARE REPLACEMENTS FOR TUNG PI-WU, WHO HAS DIED, AND FOR LI TEH-SHENG WHO HAS BEEN DISMISSED. IN ADDITION, KANG SHENG NO LONGER TAKES PART IN THE MEETINGS (PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF ILL HEALTH). ON CHOU'S SIDE, KAPITSA LISTED ONLY CHOU HIMSELF, CHU TEH, AND DFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING.

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4. CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE NEW PREDOMINANCE OF THE SHANGHAI GROUP WOULD LEAD TO AN INTENSIFICIATION OF THE CHINESE STRUGGLE AGAINST BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST. HE SAID THAT THE SHANGHAI GROUP IS HOSTILE TO BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON AND THAT IT BELIEVES THE PRC PAID TOO HIGH A PRICE FOR NORMALIZA-TION OF RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND HAS LOST ITS ROLE AS A GUIDE FOR THSREVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE. SOMEWHAT INCONSISTENTLY, KAPITSA SAID THE TACTIC OF THE PRC UNDER THE SHANGHAI GROUP WOULD BE TO PLAY THE WESTERN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

BLOC OFF AGAINST THE SOVIET BLOC.

4. SOVIET-CHINESE RELATIONS. KAPITSA CONFIRMED THAT THE ILICHEV MISSION HAD MADE NO PROGRESS ON THE BORDER TALKS. HE THEN SAID THAT THE PRC AND THE USSR HAD AGREED IN 1971 ON A PREAMBLE TO THE BORDER TREATY. HE THEN PULLED A PIECE OF PAPER OUT OF HIS DESK AND READ THE TEXT OF THE PREAMBLE TO ROMANO. AS PROVIDED BY THE ITALIAN, IT REAES AS FOLLOWS:

"THE PARTIES AGREE THAT PRESENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM SHOULD NOT PREVENT THE NORMALIZATION OF INTER-STATE RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF FULL EQUILITY, RESPECT FOR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY, MUTUAL NON-AGGRESSION, NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, MUTUAL BENEFIT, AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE."

6. SOVIET HELICOPTER. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE CHINESE HAD DEMANDED, AS A CONDITION FOR THE RETURN OF THE HELICOPTER CREW, THE RETURN OF ALL CHINESE POLITICAL REFUGEES LIVING IN THE USSR. ACCORDING TO KAPITSA, THIS DEMAND INCLUDES THE RETURN OF 60,000 KAZAKH AND UIGHUR DESERTERS WHO CROSSED OVER FROM CHINA IN 1962. KAPITSA SAID WITH A STRAIGHT FACE THAT THE USSR IS UNABLE TO RETURN ANY POLITICAL REFUGEES, SINCE IT IS COMPELLED BY THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION TO GRANT THEM POLITICAL ASYLUM. HE SAID THAT, IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE USSR HAS RETURNED TO CHINA ABOUT 45 PRC CITIZENS WHO CROSSED THE BRODER FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER. AS FOR THE REST, HE SAID, THE USSR HAS TOLD THE CHINESE THAT IT WILL TALK TO THE POLITICAL REFUGEES
CONFIDENTIAL
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AND IF THEY AGREE TO RETURN WILL FACILITATE THEIR RETURN. KAPITSA CLAIMED THAT THE USSR HAD SHOWN UNPARALLELED RESTRAINT IN THE FACE OF THESE UNACCEPTABLE CHINESE DEMANDS. EVERY DAY, HE SAID, SOVIET AUTHORITIES RECEIVE HUNDREDS OF LETTERS FROM IRATE CITIZENS REGARDING THE HELICOPTER CREW. HE ADDED THAT THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN TOLD THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAY BE COMPELLED TO RETALIATE.

7. PRC POLITICAL COUNSELOR HERE, WANG, WITH WHOM ROMANO ALSO TALKED, SAID THAT THE USSR HAS OFFERED TO RETURN TO CHINA SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO CROSSED THE BORDER BY MISTAKE IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RETURN OF THE HELICOPTER CREW. WANG SAID THAT THE CHINESE REPLY (WHICH WE NOTE CONTRADICTS KAPITSA'S ASSERTIONS) WAS THAT THE TWO QUESTIONS MUST BE TREATED SEPARATELY.

8. CHINESE POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. KAPISA SAID

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

THAT THE CHINESE WERE INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THAILAND, BURMA AND MALAYSIA. HE SAID THIS AGGRESSION IS A PREPARATION FOR CHINESE AGGRESSION AGAINST INDIA AND THAT THEREFORE SOVIET-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO PEACE. THE SOVIET UNION, HE CONTINUED, WANTS ALL THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA TO STRENGTHEN THEIR DEFENSES AGAINST EXTERNAL IMPERIALISM, WHICH MEANS, HE SAID, CHINESE EXPANSIONISM. THUS, THE SOVIETS ARE TAKING A MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD ASEAN; THOUGH IT IS A CLOSED BLOC AND THE USSR OPPOSES CLOSED BLOCS, COOPERATION WITHIN ASEAN COULD STRENGTHEN THE DEFENSE CAPABILITIES OF ITS MEMBERS. KAPITSA CONTINUED THAT THE USSR IS TAKING A MORE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD RAZAK'S NEUTRALITY PROPOSAL ON THE GROUND THAT NEUTRALITY WOULD BE RESPECTED ONLY BY THE SOVIET UNION AND THE U.S. BUT NOT BY CHINA.

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07511 02 OF 02 021438Z

46
ACTION EUR-12

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

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9. VIETNAM. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE REUNIFICATION OF VIETNAM WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FIVE TO TEN YEARS. HOWEVER, FROM THE BEGINNING THERE WOULD BE ONE VIETNAMESE PARTY AND ONE VIETNAMESE ARMY. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD WELCOME THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN WESTERN STATES AND THE PRG AND THE TWO VIETNAMS SHOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN THE UN SIMULTANEOUSLY. KAPITSA CHARACTERIZED THE "VICTORY OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE" AS A GREAT DEFEAT FOR CHINA.

10. CAMBODIA. KAPITSA SAID THAT CHINA WAS TRYING TO CONTROL CAMBODIA BUT WOULD LOSE IT. WITHOUT NAMING NAMES, HE SPOKE
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OF A STRUGGLE BETWEEN NATIONALISTS AND PRO-CHINESE ELEMENTS. HE SAID THE PRO-CHINESE FACTION HAS BEHAVED LIKE SAVAGES, KILLING A LOT OF PEOPLE AND EPOPULATING PHONM PENH WHICH CONDEMNED ADDITIONAL PEOPLE TO DEATH. HE SAID THAT SIHANOUK REMAINED POPULAR WITH THE ARMY BECAUSE THE ARMY IS LARGELY COMPOSED OF PEASANTS AND PEASANTS LOVE KINGS. SIHANOUK, HE SAID, BACKED THE CHINESE BECAUSE HE IS PRO-CHINESE AND ANTI-VIETNAMESE. EVEN IF SIHANOUK RETURNED TO CAMBODIA, KAPITSA DID NOT THINK HE WOULD PLAY AN ENDURING ROLE THERE.

11. LAOS. KAPITSA SAID THAT LAOS WOULD FOLLOW THE COURSE OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA. THERE WOULD BE A DIF-FERENCE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE PATHET LAO DOES NOT WANT A RESOLUTION OF THINGS BY FORCE, SO DEVELOPMENTS IN LAOS WOULD NOT BE SO PAINFUL.

12. JAPAN. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE FUTURE OF SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS DEPENDS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW GOING ON IN PEKING. HE SAID THAT JAPANESE ACCEPTANCE OF THE "HEGEMONY" CLAUSE WOULD FREEZE SOVIET-AJAPENESE RELATIONS FOR A LONG TIME. HE SAID THAT THE USSR IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS ALL PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE PEACE TREATY WITH JAPAN, INCLUDING THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE. AND, IF BILATERAL COOPERATION FLOURISHES AND CREATES A NEW ATMOSPHERE, THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT BE FLEXIBLE. UNFORTUNATELY, HE SAID, JAPAN HAS ADOPTED AN ATTITUDE OF ALL OR NOTHING. FOR THE SOVIET UNION, RETURN OF THE FOUR ISLANDS IS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE QUESTION. AND AS TIMEPASSES, IT MAY BE HARD FOR THE USSR TO GIVE UP TWO ISLANDS OR EVEN ONE ISLAND. HE ADDED THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THE VISIT OF A TOP SOVIET LEADER TO JAPAN IS ALSO OUT OF THE QUESTION.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

13. PAKISTAN. KAPITSA DESCRIBED SOVIET-PAK RELATIONS AS FRIENDLY BUT SAID THAT THE USSR WANTS BETTER RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. IT ALSO WANTS A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA WHICH WOULD RESULT IN PAKISTAN'S NOT FEELING THE NEED OF A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRC. KAPITSA SAID THAT IT WAS THE SOVIET ATTITUDE THAT SAVED PAKISTAN'S EXISTENCE (WHICH WE TAKE TO BE AN INDICATION THAT INDIA MIGHT HAVE CONSIDERED AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON WEST PAKISTAN IN 1971 BUT
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WAS RESTPIINED BY MOSCOW).
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EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

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